

#believeboldly

Each One Is a Part



BY STEVEN MCCARTHY

Meeting and getting to know Ben (a young man from church with disabilities) turned out to be a truly eye-opening experience. One of the first encounters I had with Ben was after I had finished practicing drums ... Ben walked up to me and boldly asked, “Can I play the drums?” I wasn’t sure what to do. I had never directly dealt with a person who had disabilities. I looked over at his mother, and she gave a nod of approval, so I handed my sticks over to Ben and let him bang around on the drums. I was amazed by the joy and passion that he displayed while playing on the drum set; it was infectious.

After that, I got to know Ben better and better as we participated in many youth events together. I learned about a lot of Ben’s likes and dislikes as well as his skills and talents. Ben inspired me to sign up for a Bethesda Service Event at Camp Lutherwood in Oregon. I spent a week at camp getting to know and serve many other adults with disabilities. This week caused me really to appreciate and respect people who spend their lives serving those with disabilities. It is a job that not many people have the heart, patience or courage to do. It really requires you to give up everything and dedicate yourself to serving God by serving those who may be less fortunate than you.

When I returned from camp, I doubled my efforts to include Ben in the youth group and to show him how he deserved to be treated. The last event I was able to attend with Ben was the Lutheran National Youth Gathering in San Antonio, Texas. It was touching to see every kid in our youth group pitching in to make sure Ben had a great experience and felt included.

I’ve left my church behind now to start college, but I hope to take the lessons and love that Ben has taught me and continue to apply them no matter where I end up in life. 1 Cor. 12:22–27 says: “On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together,

Do you know any youth with disabilities? Chances are you do at school. But what about in your youth group or at your church? Are teens with disabilities part of your group? If not, here are some ways you can get involved with caring for and about those among us who have a disability.

- › **Ask** “How can I help?” and listen to what your brothers and sisters in Christ need from you as their fellow Christian.
- › **Invite** them into your group, and introduce your new friends to your old ones, reminding all of them that they have value and worth because of what Christ has done for them.
- › **Offer** to be a mentor and friend to a teen who may need extra help. Maybe he needs extra work memorizing Bible passages in confirmation. Maybe she needs a ride to the next youth group event. Find ways to make sure that no one is left out of the body of Christ.
- › **Discover** opportunities where their gifts and talents can be recognized and used to bear witness to Christ, show mercy to their neighbors and live in a loving life together.
- › **Pray** that the Lord would instill in all of us a desire to be faithful to His bidding to love as He has loved.
- › **Rejoice** with them that the Church is the place where God gives His good gifts, those that calm fears, relieve tension and draw all people—no matter what their mental or physical abilities—to Himself. It’s also a place where all children of God can serve, share and grow in faith together.

giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

We are all part of the body of Christ, no matter what strengths or weaknesses we have. Everyone has role to play, so we should never look down upon someone simply because he or she is different.